

What Is Claimed Is:

1. An information providing apparatus, comprising:  
hierarchizing means for hierarchizing electronic  
program guide information to be provided into first  
information which designates predetermined information and  
second information to be referred to by the first  
information;

first providing means for providing at least one of  
the hierarchized first information and second information;  
and

second providing means for providing layout  
information from within the electronic program guide  
information which relates to a layout when the electronic  
program guide information is to be displayed on a screen.

2. An information providing apparatus according to  
claim 1, wherein said first providing means provides the  
first information or the second information by radio or  
wire communication or by a recording medium, and said  
second providing means provides the layout information by  
radio or wire communication or by a recording medium.

3. An information providing apparatus according to  
claim 1, wherein said first providing means provides the  
first information by radio or wire communication when a

broadcasting time of a program is changed.

4. An information providing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said first providing means provides the first information in a superposed relationship with a vertical blanking period of a television signal.

5. An information providing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said first providing means provides the first information digitally in a superposed relationship with a television signal.

6. An information providing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said first providing means and said second providing means provide the first information and the second information as well as the layout information digitally by means of radio or wire communication.

7. An information providing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said hierarchizing means determines that information of the electronic program guide information which is changed between regular broadcasting and re-broadcasting as the first information and determines that information of the electronic program guide information which is not changed as the second information.

8. An information providing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said hierarchizing means determines that information of the electronic program guide information

which is changed between key station broadcasting and local station broadcasting as the second information and determines that information of the electronic program guide information which is not changed as the second information.

9. An information providing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said hierarchizing means hierarchizes the second information further into third information which is small in amount and is referred to by the third information and fourth information which is large in amount and is referred to by the first information or the third information.

10. An information providing apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the first information is information in units of a program to be broadcast and the third information of the second information includes information for identifying a performer who constructs the program while the fourth information of the second information includes information regarding details of a performer who performs in the program.

11. An information providing method, comprising the steps of:

hierarchizing electronic program guide information to be provided into first information which designates predetermined information and second information to be

referred to by the first information;

providing the hierarchized first information or second information; and

providing layout information from within the electronic program guide information which relates to a layout when the electronic program guide information is to be displayed on a screen.

12. A transmission medium which transmits a program, the program including the steps of:

hierarchizing electronic program guide information to be provided into first information which designates predetermined information and second information to be referred to by the first information;

providing at least one of the hierarchized first information or second information; and

providing layout information which relates to a layout when the electronic program guide information is to be displayed on a screen.

13. A display controlling apparatus, comprising:

first acquiring means for acquiring, from within electronic program guide information hierarchized into first information which designates predetermined information and second information to be referred to by the first information, at least one of the first information

and the second information;

second acquiring means for acquiring layout information of the electronic program guide information regarding a layout when the electronic program guide information is to be displayed on a screen; and

producing means for producing display information to be used to display the electronic program guide information from at least one of the first information and the second information, and the layout information.

14. A display controlling apparatus according to claim 13, further comprising display means for displaying the electronic program guide information.

15. A display controlling apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said producing means retrieves information necessary to be displayed from the first information or the second information in response to the layout information and produces the display information in response to the retrieved information and the layout information.

16. A display controlling apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said producing means hierarchizes the retrieved information into first intermediate information regarding contents to be displayed at individual layout positions based on the layout information and second

intermediate information to be referred to by the first intermediate information and designates the first information.

17. A display controlling apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said producing means sorts the first information to be designated as the second intermediate information.

18. A display controlling apparatus according to claim 17, further comprising instructing means for instructing sorting of the first information to be designated as the second intermediate information.

19. A display controlling apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said first or second acquiring means acquires at least one of the first information, the second information and the layout information from a recording medium.

20. A display controlling apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said first or second acquiring means fetches at least one of the first information, the second information and the layout information from data transmitted thereto by radio or wire communication.

21. A display controlling method, comprising the steps of:

acquiring, from within electronic program guide

information hierarchized into first information which designates predetermined information and second information to be referred to by the first information, at least one of the first information and the second information;

acquiring layout information regarding a layout of the electronic program guide information when the electronic program guide information is to be displayed on a screen; and

producing display information to be used to display the electronic program guide information from at least one of the first information and the second information, and the layout information.

22. A transmission medium which transmits a program, the program including the steps of:

acquiring, from within electronic program guide information hierarchized into first information which designates predetermined information and second information to be referred to by the first information, at least one of the first information and the second information;

acquiring layout information regarding a layout of the electronic program guide information when the electronic program guide information is to be displayed on a screen; and

producing display information to be used to display

the electronic program guide information from at least one of the first information and the second information, and the layout information.

23. An information providing system, comprising:

hierarchizing means for hierarchizing electronic program guide information to be provided into first information which designates predetermined information and second information to be referred to by the first information;

first providing means for providing at least one of the hierarchized first information or second information;

second providing means for providing layout information from within the electronic program guide information which relates to a layout when the electronic program guide information is to be displayed on a screen;

first acquiring means for acquiring at least one of the first information and the second information;

second acquiring means for acquiring layout information of the electronic program guide information regarding a layout when the electronic program guide information is to be displayed on a screen; and

producing means for producing display information to be used to display the electronic program guide

information from at least one of the first information and the second information, and the layout information.

24. An information providing method, comprising the steps of:

hierarchizing electronic program guide information to be provided into first information which designates predetermined information and second information to be referred to by the first information;

providing at least one of the hierarchized first information and second information;

providing layout information from within the electronic program guide information which relates to a layout when the electronic program guide information is to be displayed on a screen;

acquiring at least one of the first information and the second information;

acquiring layout information of the electronic program guide information regarding a layout when the electronic program guide information is to be displayed on a screen; and

producing display information to be used to display the electronic program guide information from at least one of the first information and the second information, and the layout information.

25. A transmission medium which transmits a program, the program including the steps of:

hierarchizing electronic program guide information to be provided into first information which designates predetermined information and second information to be referred to by the first information;

providing at least one of the hierarchized first information and second information;

providing layout information from within the electronic program guide information which relates to a layout when the electronic program guide information is to be displayed on a screen;

acquiring at least one of the first information and the second information;

acquiring layout information of the electronic program guide information regarding a layout when the electronic program guide information is to be displayed on a screen; and

producing display information to be used to display the electronic program guide information from at least one of the first information and the second information, and the layout information.